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ADDRESS BY
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, HONORABLE STEPHEN AILES
AT THE 93D ANNUAL MEMBERS BANQUET
NATIONAL, RIFLE ASSOCIATION,
AMBASSADOR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 1964 -- 8:00 P.M. (PST)
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ADDRESS BY
THE HONORABLE STEPHEN AILES
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION
93d ANNUAL MEMBERS BANQUET
AMBASSADOR HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIF.
WEDNESDAY, 8 APRIL 1964

Judge Rummel, Mr. Orth, Distinguished Guests, and Members
of the National Rifle Association of America.

First, I would like to convey a message from the President of
the United States. President Johnson has a lively interest in the affairs
of this Association, the oldest, continuously active Association of
sportsmen in the United States, and asked me to express to you his
greetings and best wishes.

Since my official responsibilities have to do with the United States
Army, and since your main interest, as a group, has to do with a rifle,
it would seem to be clearly in order for me to talk to you tonight about
that aspect of this nation's military power where our interests come
together — I refer, of course, to the rifleman.

A review of the items included in the defense budget for any given
year reflects large expenditures for intercontinental ballistic missiles,
supersonic aircraft, submarines, tanks, self-propelled artillery,
helicopters and vehicles. Research funds finance esoteric projects
which seek to develop bizarre items for future wars. One could easily
conclude from such an analysis that the rifle no longer has a role in
modern warfare.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

For a time, our national strategy did place principal reliance on
nuclear weapons and we did seek to convince ourselves that a threat
of massive retaliation with these weapons would deter all forms of
aggression against us or against our friends. Further analysis and

the unfolding of history convinces us that this strategy was inaccurate. Under it we face the danger that in President Kennedy's phrase, "The free world might be nibbled away at the periphery." We came to realize that a flexible response was required, that the United States must possess the full range of military capabilities, and that we could best deter all types of aggression by being prepared to meet each type in the appropriate way.

This was a view long held in the Army. A distinguished former Chief of Staff, General George H. Decker, put it very well.

"We soldiers share a conviction as to the future — a deeply rooted faith in the indispensability and in the permanency of the land combat function. We realize that the means to perform this function will change in the future as they have in the past. But we have an unshakable faith that as long as there is land, and people on the land, the land combat function itself will remain a decisive element in any future conflict."

As we searched for strategies to give us alternatives to thermo-nuclear war, the nation once again turned to its riflemen. It once again learned the lesson that the ultimate objective of any conflict is to control ground and protect or control the people who live on it. We have once again found that the most discriminating of our weapons systems is the man with the rifle.

He is the bearer of a proud American tradition, as the latest in a long line of independent and self-sufficient men who earned this country's independence and who have protected it for 188 years. This tradition has its roots even before our Revolutionary War. When militia organizations formed the local defense of the American colonies, it was this militia, made up of men who brought their own rifles, their own ammunition and their own powder who fought the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill. It was this militia, armed with the home rifle and considerable skill in marksmanship, and serving under the command of Colonel George Washington, who saved the remnants of Braddock's Army after the rout of the British regulars near Pittsburgh.

The United States Army traces its history to the 14th of June 1775 on which date the Second Continental Congress decided to raise "10 companies of expert riflemen." These 10 companies constituted the nucleus, around

which the Continental Army was built. It is worthy of note that most of our men at Valley Forge were riflemen and that the teaching for which Baron von Steuben has become famous was that of the Manual of Arms and Infantry Tactics.

At one point, shortly after the British withdrew from the United States, our Army consisted of only 87 men — mostly riflemen.

During President Washington's Administration, the Army was gradually increased to 3300 men, mainly riflemen. During the same Administration, Springfield Arsenal was established as a site for the manufacture of rifles for the Army. Thus, was established what has become a household word in military rifles. It is interesting to note that in its first year of production - 1795 - Springfield produced 445 muskets at a cost, with accessories, of about \$25.00, each. They were copies of the French Charleville musket, 10,000 of which had been brought here by Lafayette. (Parenthetically, I point out that here is a military aid program with us in the role of beneficiary.)

I have one of these old Springfield muskets, vintage 1804, hanging on the wall of my office and I must say that it is still a handsome piece of equipment. A photograph of it appeared in your magazine, The National Rifleman, last year.

It was with these muskets that Winfield Scott's Infantry was armed when they made such an impression on the British Commander at Chippewa in the War of 1812. When seeing those qualities which make riflemen great - courage, discipline, knowledge of their weapon - he exclaimed, "by God, those are regulars."

As you all know, we proceeded through a series of basic changes to our rifles over the years. We rifled them and we adopted percussion caps. After some false starts, we got around to breech loaders. We improved the ammunition so that the cap, cartridge, and ball were combined. We picked up the bolt action. We went to semi-automatic weapons, we are now attempting to make even greater progress by using extremely high velocity projectiles. But during all of this period of time, we have been trying to provide the most effective weapon for the man who finally closes with the enemy, seizes, holds, and secures the land.

By the time of the Mexican War, our Army still consisted primarily of riflemen - some 75% of our Army at that time consisted of men with rifles. The men who carried the Confederacy to its height in Chancellorsville and who defended the Union so well at Gettysburg were riflemen. By this time, greater quantities of artillery had been made available, greater use was being made of cavalry and we were beginning to find better ways and means of moving supplies about the theater of operations. Nonetheless, all of our efforts to exploit technology were aimed at putting the rifleman on a critical piece of ground and helping him to stay there. It has been estimated that at the time of its highest strength, 83% of the Union Army of over a million men, were Infantrymen.

Following that war, the Army was reduced to 25,000 and was dispersed to its stations on the frontier. Riflemen fought in 13 campaigns and over 1,000 engagements to maintain peace on the westward expanding frontier.

In spite of the efforts of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders at San Juan Hill, it was riflemen from the regular Army and the militia who secured Cuba for the Cubans. Riflemen captured Puerto Rico and suppressed the Philippine Insurrection. It was a trumpeter in a rifle company who said, "I'll try, Sir," and scaled the wall and ran up the flag in Peking in 1900. Colonel Calvin P. Titus who performed that exploit, and received the Medal of Honor for it (while a cadet at West Point) lives here in Los Angeles at the present time.

In World War I, which Laurence Stallings so aptly called the "Doughboys War," we sent to Europe over a million riflemen and it was these American riflemen who broke the back of the Veteran German Army. It was of these riflemen, their predecessors and successors that General MacArthur so eloquently said:

"His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me, or from any other man. He has written it in red on his enemy's breast.

"But when I think of his patience in adversity, of his courage under fire and of his modesty in victory, I am filled with an emotion of admiration I cannot put into

words. He belongs to history as furnishing one of the greatest examples of successful patriotism. He belongs to posterity as the instructor of future generations in the principles of liberty and freedom. He belongs to the present, to us, by his virtues and by his achievements."

In World War II, despite the unprecedented requirement to provide an air force and to sustain world-wide lines of communications, we estimate that over two million of the men in Army uniform carried the war to the enemy with a rifle in hand.

In answer to these questions, concerning the role of the rifleman in future wars, I can only say that we still count the strength of the Army in terms of divisions. We talk of a 14 division Army, a 16 division Army, or an 18 division Army, all else is ancillary. The cutting edge of a division consists of its riflemen and its tanks. And even the strongest supporters of Armor readily acknowledge that tanks cannot accomplish their tasks unless there are riflemen with them or near at hand. These riflemen continue to play the same role that the Continental Congress envisioned for these 10 companies of expert riflemen in 1775.

I should also point out that in recent years we have found ourselves faced with a new form of threat; the so-called war of national liberation. We prefer to call it guerrilla warfare or insurgency. As we looked about for ways and means of countering this threat, we once again found that many of the skills which we needed to pass on to our threatened Allies were the skills of the rifleman. Men with rifles are now scattered throughout the world helping our most immediately threatened friends in their fight against communist subversion. It is men trained to lead riflemen who are advising Vietnamese battalions. Our Special Forces teams are basically riflemen. One of the first skills they teach to the people in Vietnam is that of self-defense with a rifle.

Today's concept of the land battle still places major emphasis on the rifleman. Most of the equipment we buy is designed in one way or another to help the rifleman do his job and to protect him while he does it. Artillery softens up enemy positions or knocks out enemy artillery. Armor exploits a weakness in the line, creates a breakthrough and overruns (or some times bypasses) positions which the infantry will then take and hold. The armored personnel carrier, as its name implies, is simply a

device which enables the infantryman to ride to work protected from air burst artillery. Indeed, the Air Assault Division now being tested, the new mobility concept about which you have heard, is permitting the infantryman to ride to his task by air. Our sole purpose in that experiment is to develop a better way to put the rifleman at the decisive point on the battlefield, at the decisive time, in the best possible condition.

In the Army, we hold to the conviction that a man cannot be a soldier unless he knows how to use a rifle. As a result, every recruit spends over 25% of his training time during his eight weeks of basic training learning how to shoot the rifle accurately. Over the past six years, we have spent 8-1/2 million dollars for range facilities on our various posts.

The effectiveness of the rifle, its range and its lethality depend entirely on the skill of the man who shoots it. This is why we spend so much time training the individual rifleman in marksmanship. This is why the work of the National Rifle Association is so important to the United States Army.

In my previous job as Under Secretary of the Army, I was closely associated with the NRA while serving on the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice. I am well aware of the fact that this organization of 625,000 Americans has done a great deal to bring the aims of the National Board to reality. The program of training instructors in marksmanship, of supporting the National Matches, and of participating in International Matches is one of which the NRA can be proud. The presence in our country of 28,000 certified marksmanship instructors is truly an asset to this country.

Of increasing importance is the program of International Shooting. Last year, I had the pleasure of presenting the first Distinguished Shooting Badge to our world rifle champion, Garry L. Anderson. I hope that it will be possible for all of us to congratulate winners in this year's rifle and shotgun competitions in the Olympics. All of us are proud of our marksmanship tradition - the tradition of the Kentucky Rifleman. Largely due to the wholehearted efforts of the NRA, the United States will become paramount in the increasing number of International Marksmanship contests in which we engage.

Finally, I would like to say a word of commendation for a recent action by the NRA which I think brings to both the Association and its

members credit as responsible, patriotic citizens. I speak here of the important stand that the Association has taken in favor of the recent legislation proposed by Senator Dodd to exercise additional controls on the sale of firearms. We trace our freedom to possess arms to the Second Amendment to the Constitution. Sometimes those who would put virtually no restriction on the sale of firearms read only the last half of this Amendment, that is, "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." We should not forget that the whole sentence reads, "A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." Thus, it was to permit the people to bear arms in defense of society that they are insured the right to keep these arms. This Amendment was written at a time when it was assumed that virtually the entire male population would be called to arms in the event of a threat. It was also assumed that this threat could easily be a local one. While it is true that our militia is now organized, our threat is rarely local, and a need remains.

People who "keep arms" learn to shoot them. Men who have handled a rifle since boyhood develop skills with it that our most extensive and modern training techniques can scarcely hope to duplicate and become more effective soldiers when they join the Army. Effective soldiers are "necessary to a free society." and in that sense the purpose of the Second Amendment still obtains, even if the threat is changed.

On the other hand, if some aspects of the sale or possession of arms are a threat to society, it would seem to me that there is every reason to regulate this sale and possession. I am convinced that this Association has done well by itself and by the country in adopting the responsible position that it has in this matter. We must control the lawless while gaining the maximum that a free society can gain.

Thus, we will carry on the great heritage of the American Rifleman.